



Madison Valley Long-Term Solution NW Diversion and Washington Park Stormwater Storage Project

Notes from 9/17/08 Public Meeting on 30th Ave. E and E John St. Above-Ground Stormwater Facility Expansion (Phase 1)

Meeting Overview

On September 17, 2008, 36 community members attended a public meeting at The Bush School in Madison Valley to provide input on Seattle Public Utilities' (SPU) before design concepts for Phase 1 - Expansion of the Above-Ground Stormwater Storage Facility at 30th Ave. E and E John St. Presenters included: Brent Middleswart, SPU Project Manager; Rick Ballard, RH2 Engineering; Karen Kiest, Landscape Architect; Peter Nelson, Landscape Architect; Ruri Yampolsky, Seattle Arts Commission. After the question and answer period, Karen Kiest explained that she would modify the draft concept designs into one 30% or schematic design based on the comments received and SPU would have another meeting for community input on that design.

The below is a summary of comments, questions and answers on the before design concepts received during the meeting.

Brent Middleswart: Provided an overview of the process of the 30th Ave. E and E John St. above-ground stormwater facility expansion. He explained that there were three planned meetings for community input on the development of the design for the facility.

Ruri Yampolsky: Explained that funding from 1% for art would be used at this site, though the Seattle Arts Commission is just starting to develop a new roster for artists which could take a number of months, therefore, the artist would join this project after they were selected from that new roster.

Karen Kiest: Gave an overview of the current site and inspirations for initial draft Concepts A and B.

Public Comments, Questions and Responses:

Question: Could you create a play area on a structure on the site?

Answer: An open deck creates hiding places which people generally don't like in their neighborhood. Karen Kiest said she thinks working with the earth we can create a much more attractive, natural looking site.

Question: If there was a water feature at the bottom of the site, have you thought about West Nile Virus?

Answer: The water would be continuously draining toward the north end of the site.

Question: Have you thought about putting in a shelter since it rains a lot in Seattle?

Answer: Community members answered that it was not a good idea to encourage people to be in the area when it was raining.

Question: Is there any level ground for playing frisbee?

Answer: If we create more level ground, we would need to create steeper areas somewhere else because of the overall stormwater storage capacity requirements. This could mean the need for retaining walls which generally attracts graffiti.

Question: What is the circle in the middle of the Draft Concept A drawing?

Answer: It is a gravel/paved walk that encircles a lower planting area – sort of like a donut.

Comment: Want to hear more about the stream concept. Don't like the area to be used as a dog park with dogs off leash.

Answer: Karen Kiest explained more about the initial design that includes the stream concept. With a central walk (either Concept A or B) there would not be continuous lawn areas.

Comment: Don't want places where people can hide for safety reasons.

Comment: Want more amenities for kids like a play structure somewhere. May be there could be a small one on the terraced area. Would also like some flat space for kids to play like a half basketball court where the plaza is in the southwest corner.

Answer: Karen said she wants to maximize the natural play theme for kids. Kids play structures need large fall zone areas, about 6 feet on each side. She said that typically as many neighbors like basketball courts as the number that really dislike them. We can look at putting in large rocks for kids to climb on and an undulating grassy slope they can play on.

Comment: Like less structured play area because of the strict regulations on play structures. Want SPU to work with the community on the visibility of the site. The more formal design may be easier to see in, and therefore safer.

Comment: Ruri Yampolsky explained that an artist will be coming on board in the future on this project and it would be good to provide that artist with concepts the community is interested in for the art element.

Comment: A nearby park has stone animals to play on. There is a great need for play space for kids.

Response: Karen said she likes that people are coming up with good ideas for the site and she will think more about how to incorporate the ideas in the draft design, including more play space for kids.

Question: If you don't mow some areas of the grasses, like ornamental grasses, will that area turn into horsetails?

Answer: The areas that would be intentionally left as long grasses would sometimes be mowed to help keep horsetails out.

Comment: Put the circle in the middle of Initial Concept A on the right-hand side to create a place for performances, such as Shakespeare in the Park.

Comment: Formal play structures are so limited now because of regulations. Boulders, rocks and logs would be better.

Comment: Would not bring kids to play at this site because of contaminants from stormwater.

Comment: Want a cement terraced area of some width for sitting. Want water-loving plants at the bottom. This facility can fill quickly in very large storms.

Comment: Want color, texture, different shaped leaves and trees with interesting bark. Safety is a concern.

Response: Karen said she likes the ideas of flowers on the site to add color and varied texture and shapes. These elements are included in the concepts.

Comment: Likes the more natural approach (Draft Concept B). There is a large pine on the site, does it need to go?

Answer: Unfortunately, the pine needs to go because of its location.

Question: Can we move the large pine into another area? They did that at the Kubota Gardens.

Answer: We can look into the possibility of moving the pine, but the Kubota Gardens trees are maintained very carefully while they are developing and the roots were pruned intentionally so they can be moved. This tree was not maintained in that manner and its roots are likely very spread out.

Question: After it is built, who will maintain the facility?

Answer: SPU will be responsible for the maintenance.

Comment: You could put up pictures of the houses that used to be on this site and information about the history of the area.

Comment: Put history on one half of the boulders to make it an interactive park.

Comment: The plum trees are well used. Want to keep them at the site with the poplars. Keep trees on the east side of the site next to the neighbors' properties low enough to allow sunlight into their properties.

For questions about the 9/17/08 public meeting or these meeting notes, please contact Elaine Yeung at elaine.yeung@seattle.gov.